



United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 107th CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 27, 2001

House of Representatives

GUILLERMO A. GOMEZ, A ROLE MODEL FOR OUR YOUTH!

HON. BOB FILNER
OF CALIFORNIA
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MR. FILNER: Mr. Speaker, and colleagues, I rise today to recognize and honor Guillermo A. Gomez, a sixth-grade bilingual teacher at Vista Square Elementary School in Chula Vista, California.

Mr. Gomez was nominated by the California Teachers Association (CTA) for the prestigious National Education Association Foundation Award for Teaching Excellence. He was the only California teacher, chosen from a pool of more than 300,000 educators, to represent our state of California. Although he was not the final winner, his nomination is a glowing tribute to his service to our children.

CTA President Wayne Johnson's nomination letter includes the following information about Mr. Gomez and his achievements: "CTA conducted a search for nominees for this prestigious award. Many excellent California teachers were nominated, but Mr. Gomez stood head and shoulders above the rest. Not only is he an excellent teacher, but he is also an inspiring one. He created an after-school program called Circle of Little Brothers and Circle of Little Sisters, where he helps upper-elementary students explore possibilities for their futures. He coordinates an after-school homework center and takes the lead in training staff on English language development standards.

Becoming concerned that there were few males, especially of Latino descent, who were involved in a school with many Latino children, Mr. Gomez, along with another teacher, created a group called "Mi Papa" in the community resource center. This program helps bring fathers into the school community as role models and pairs them with children in educational and art activities.

Despite the fact that he has been a teacher for only six years, Mr. Gomez is active in his local CTA chapter, Chula Vista Educators. He serves on many communities and, as an association representative, he kept teachers in his school informed and focused during recent negotiations with the school district. He is also the chair of the political action committee for his local association. In short, CTA believes that Mr. Gomez exemplifies all the qualities that are present in the best teachers: dedication, caring, innovation and creativity, and teaching excellence."

Both Marilyn Prall, Principal, and Martha Deichler, Associate Principal of his school, who was Mr. Gomez' mentor, attest to his efforts to

grow professionally and to become the best teacher possible--asking for advice, taking suggestions, and making them work in his own classroom. They believe that his passion for teaching has enabled him to become the excellent teacher he is today.

Mr. Gomez also works outside the classroom walls with the families of his students. He believes that only as an active social agent in the community can a teacher provide opportunities for students to advance in this competitive society. He participates in literacy nights, harvest carnivals, job-a-thons, and fundraising activities, such as car washes and haunted houses, to make sure that all of his students can go to sixth grade camp. In his "spare time", he also coaches soccer!

Mr. Gomez' public service goes beyond his local community. He and his students are often involved in charitable activities to help victims of natural disasters thousands of miles away. He is compassionate and appreciative of all people and cultures. His students know that he cares deeply about them and their families, and they return year after year to visit Mr. Gomez after their elementary school graduation.

Mr. Gomez is a graduate of San Diego State University (SDSU) and holds a Bilingual Cross-Cultural Language Academic Development multiple subject credential. He will receive his Master's Degree in Latin American studies from SDSU this coming summer. In addition, he regularly attends Saturday workshops, after-school in servicing training, and district workshops. He reads professionally and implements in his classroom the methods and ideas supported by current research.

Mr. Gomez knows the abilities of each and every one of his students and works to help each child achieve his or her full potential. He is proud to be a teacher, and I am proud that he is a teacher in my Congressional District. He will be honored by the National Education Association Foundation for the Improvement of Education in Washington, DC on December 6, 2001.

A sincere thank you, Mr. Gomez, for your dedication to our young people, the future of our nation.